

**Greatest Of All Times**

**108**

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**Globally selected  
PERSONALITIES**



**Jul 356 BC <::><::><::> Jun 323 BC**

Compiled by:  
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July 356 BC



Jun 323 BC

# Wars of Alexander the Great

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wars\\_of\\_Alexander\\_the\\_Great](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wars_of_Alexander_the_Great)



Map of Alexander's empire and his route

## Wars of Alexander the Great



Alexander, depicted with his horse Bucephalus, fighting Persian king Darius III, from the *Alexander Mosaic of Pompeii* (Naples National Archaeological Museum, Italy)

<b>Date</b>	336–323 BC (13 years)
<b>Location</b>	<a href="#">Greece</a> , <a href="#">Illyria</a> , <a href="#">Thrace</a> , <a href="#">Danube Delta</a> , <a href="#">Anatolia</a> , <a href="#">Syria</a> , <a href="#">Phoenicia</a> ( <a href="#">Israel</a> , <a href="#">Palestine</a> ), <a href="#">Egypt</a> , <a href="#">Mesopotamia</a> , <a href="#">Persia</a> , <a href="#">Afghanistan</a> , <a href="#">Sogdiana</a> , <a href="#">Bactria</a> , <a href="#">India</a>
<b>Result</b>	Macedonian victory
<b>Territorial changes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Macedonian Empire</a> spans from the <a href="#">Balkans</a> and <a href="#">Egypt</a> in the west to <a href="#">Central Asia</a> and <a href="#">India</a> in the east</li> <li>• Beginning of the <a href="#">Hellenistic period</a></li> </ul>

### Belligerents

#### Macedonian Empire

- [Hellenic League](#)

#### Achaemenid Empire

show  
*Balkans:*  
 show  
*Western and Central Asia:*  
 show  
*India:*

### Commanders and leaders

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Alexander III of Macedon</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Parmenion</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Antipater</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Ptolemy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Hephaestion</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Craterus</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Philotas</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Cleitus</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Perdiccas</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Coenus</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Lysimachus</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Antigonos</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Nearchus</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Cassander</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Seleucus</a></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Darius III of Persia</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Bessus</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Arsites</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Memnon</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Azemilcus</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Batis</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Ariobarzanes</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Madares</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Ariarathes I</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Agis III</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Spitamenes</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Porus</a></li> </ul> |
|--|---|



The **wars of Alexander the Great** ([Ancient Greek](#): Πόλεμοι του Μεγάλου Αλεξάνδρου) were a series of [conquests](#) carried out by [Alexander III](#) of [Macedon](#) from 336 to 323 BC. They began with battles against the [Achaemenid Empire](#), then under the rule of [Darius III](#). After Alexander's chain of victories, he began a campaign against local chieftains and warlords that stretched from [Greece](#) to as far as the region of [Punjab](#) in [South Asia](#). By the time [he died](#), Alexander ruled over most regions of Greece and the conquered Achaemenid Empire, including much of [Achaemenid Egypt](#); he did not, however, manage to conquer the [Indian subcontinent](#) in its entirety according to his initial plan.

Despite his military accomplishments, Alexander did not provide any stable alternative to the rule of the Achaemenids, and his untimely death threw the vast territories he conquered into a series of civil wars commonly known as the [Wars of the Diadochi](#).

Alexander assumed kingship over ancient Macedonia following the [assassination of his father, Philip II](#) (r. 359–336 BC). During his two decades on the throne, Philip II had unified the [poleis](#) (Greek city-states) of mainland Greece (with Macedonian hegemony) under the [League of Corinth](#). Alexander proceeded to solidify Macedonian rule by quashing a rebellion in the southern Greek city-states and staged a short but bloody excursion against the city-states to the north. He then proceeded east to carry out his plans to conquer the Achaemenid Empire. His campaign of conquests from Greece spanned across [Anatolia](#), [Syria](#), [Phoenicia](#), Egypt, [Mesopotamia](#), [Greater Iran](#), [Afghanistan](#), and [India](#). He extended the boundaries of his [Macedonian Empire](#) as far east as the city of [Taxila](#) in modern-day [Pakistan](#).

Prior to his death, Alexander had also made plans for a Macedonian military and mercantile expansion into the [Arabian Peninsula](#), after which he planned to turn his armies to [Carthage](#), [Rome](#), and the [Iberian Peninsula](#) in the west. However, the [Diadochi](#) (his political rivals) abandoned these plans after he died; instead, within a few years of Alexander's death, the Diadochi began a series of military campaigns against each other and divided the territories of the Macedonian Empire among themselves, triggering 40 years of warfare during the [Hellenistic period](#).

## **Historical campaigns**

### **Background**



**The Kingdom of Macedon in 332 BC**

In 336 BC, Philip II was assassinated by the [captain of his bodyguards, Pausanias of Orestis](#). Philip's son, and previously designated heir, Alexander, was proclaimed king by the Macedonian noblemen and army. He also succeeded his father as head of the [League of Corinth](#), a [confederation](#) of Greek states that were under the [hegemony](#) of [Macedonia](#) in order to combat the [Achaemenid Empire](#).

News of Philip's death roused many states into revolt, including [Thebes](#), [Athens](#), [Thessaly](#), as well as the [Thracian tribes](#) to the north of Macedon. When news of the revolt reached Alexander, he took quick action. Although his advisers recommended the use of [diplomacy](#), Alexander ignored the advice and instead proceeded to gather his [Macedonian cavalry](#) of 3,000 men. Together, the army rode south towards Thessaly (Macedon's immediate neighbor to the south). When he found the Thessalian army blocking the pass between [Mount Olympus](#) and [Mount Ossa](#), he had his men ride over Mount Ossa. When the Thessalians awoke, they found Alexander at their rear. The Thessalians quickly surrendered, and their cavalry was added to Alexander's force. He then proceeded south, towards the [Peloponnese](#).

Alexander stopped at [Thermopylae](#), where he was recognized as the leader of the [Sacred League](#) before heading south to [Corinth](#). Athens sued for peace and Alexander received the envoy and pardoned anyone involved with the uprising. At Corinth, he was given the title '[Hegemon](#)' of the Greek forces against the Persians. Whilst at Corinth, he heard the news of a Thracian uprising in the north.

### **Balkan campaign**

Before crossing to Asia, Alexander wanted to safeguard his northern borders and, in the spring of 335 BC, he advanced into Thrace to deal with the revolt, which was led by the [Illyrians](#) and [Triballi](#). At [Mount Haemus](#), the Macedonian army attacked and defeated a Thracian garrison manning the heights. The Macedonians were then attacked in the rear by the Triballi, who were crushed in turn. Alexander then advanced on to the [Danube](#), encountering the [Getae](#) tribe on the opposite shore. The Getae army retreated after the first cavalry [skirmish](#), leaving their town to the Macedonian army. News then reached Alexander that [Cleitus](#), King of Illyria, and [King Glaukias](#) of the [Taulantii](#) were in open revolt against Macedonian authority. Alexander defeated each in turn, forcing Cleitus and Glaukias to flee with their armies, leaving Alexander's northern [frontier](#) secure.

While he was triumphantly campaigning north, the Thebans and Athenians rebelled once more. Alexander reacted immediately, but, while the other cities once again hesitated, Thebes decided to resist with the utmost vigor. This resistance was useless, however, as the city was razed to the ground amid great bloodshed and its territory divided between the other Boeotian cities. The end of Thebes cowed Athens into submission, leaving all of Greece at least outwardly at peace with Alexander.

### **PERSIA**

#### **Asia Minor**

In 334 BC, Alexander crossed the [Hellespont](#) into Asia. It took over one hundred [triremes](#) (triple-banked galleys) to transport the entire Macedonian army, but the Persians decided to ignore the movement.

In these early months, Darius still refused to take Alexander seriously or mount a serious challenge to Alexander's movements. [Memnon of Rhodes](#), the Greek mercenary who aligned himself with the Persians, advocated for a [scorched earth](#) strategy. He wanted the Persians to destroy the land in front of Alexander, which he hoped would force Alexander's army to starve, and then to turn back. The satraps in Anatolia rejected this advice, considering it their duty to defend their land. Eventually, with Alexander advancing deeper into Persian territory, Darius ordered all five satraps of the Anatolian provinces to pool their military resources together and confront Alexander. This army was guided by Memnon, while absolute command was split among the five satraps.

### **Battle of the Granicus River**



**Map of what would become Alexander's empire**

The [Battle of the Granicus River](#) in May 334 BC was fought in Northwestern Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey), near the site of [Troy](#). After crossing the [Hellespont](#), Alexander advanced up the road to the capital of the [Satrapy](#) of [Phrygia](#). The various satraps of the Persian Empire gathered their forces at the town of Zelea and offered battle on the banks of the Granicus River. Alexander ultimately fought many of his battles on a river bank. By doing so, he was able to minimize the advantage the Persians had in numbers. In addition, the deadly Persian chariots were useless on a cramped, muddy river bank.

[Arrian](#), [Diodorus](#), and [Plutarch](#) all mention the battle, with Arrian providing the most detail. The Persians placed their cavalry in front of their infantry, and drew up on the right (east) bank of the river. The Macedonian line was arrayed with the heavy [Phalanxes](#) in the middle, Macedonian cavalry led by Alexander on the right, and allied Thessalian cavalry led by Parmenion on the left. The Persians expected the main assault to come from Alexander's position and moved units from their center to that flank.



**Hellenistic marble bust of Alexander dating from 2nd-1st century BC,  
possibly from Alexandria, Egypt, now at the British Museum**

Alexander's second-in-command, [Parmenion](#), suggested crossing the river upstream and attacking at dawn the next day, but Alexander attacked immediately. He ordered a small group of cavalry and light infantry to attack from the Macedonian right to draw the Persians off the bank and into the river. Seeing that he had broken the Persian line, Alexander led his horse companions in oblique order further to the right in order to outflank the Persians and buy time for his infantry to cross the river. <sup>[16]</sup> Several high-ranking Persian nobles were killed by Alexander himself or his bodyguards, although Alexander was stunned by an axe-blow from a Persian nobleman named Spithridates. Before the noble could deal a death-blow, however, he was killed by [Cleitus the Black](#). The Macedonian cavalry opened a hole in the Persian line as the Macedonian infantry advanced, forcing the enemy back and eventually breaking their center. The Persian cavalry turned and fled the battlefield, and the Greek mercenary infantry they held in reserve were encircled by the Macedonians and slaughtered; only around two-thousand of which survived, and were sent back to Macedonia for labor. <sup>[17]</sup>

### **Alexander consolidates support in Asia Minor**

After the battle, Alexander buried the dead Greeks and Persians and sent the captured Greek mercenaries back to Greece to work in the mines as an abject lesson for any Greek who decided to fight for the Persians. He sent some of the spoils back to Greece, including three hundred [panoplies](#) (complete Persian suits of armor) back to Athens to be dedicated in the [Parthenon](#) with the inscription "Alexander, son of Philip and the Greeks, [Lacedaemonians](#) ([Spartans](#)) excepted, these spoils from the barbarians who dwell in Asia".

[Antipater](#), whom Alexander had left in charge of Macedon in his absence, had been given a free hand to install dictators and tyrants wherever he saw fit in order to minimize the risk of a rebellion. As he moved deeper into Persia, however, the threat of trouble seemed to grow. Many of these towns had been ruled for generations by heavy handed tyrants, so in these Persian towns, he did the opposite of what he did in Greece. Wanting to appear to be a liberator, he freed the population and allowed self-government. As he continued marching into Persia, he saw that his victory at Granicus had been lost on no one. Town after town seemed to surrender to him. The [satrap](#) at [Sardis](#), as well as his garrison, was among the first of many satraps to capitulate.

As these satraps gave up, Alexander appointed new ones to replace them, and claimed to distrust the accumulation of absolute power into anyone's hands. There appeared to be little change from the old system. Alexander, however, appointed independent boards to collect tribute and taxes from the satrapies, which appeared to do nothing more than improve the efficiency of government. The true effect, however, was to separate the civil from the financial function of these satrapies, thus ensuring that these governments, while technically independent of him, never truly were. Otherwise, he allowed the inhabitants of these towns to continue as they always had, and made no attempt to impose Greek customs on them. Meanwhile, ambassadors from other Greek cities in Asia Minor came to Alexander, offering submission if he allowed their 'democracies' to continue. Alexander granted their wish, and allowed them to stop paying taxes to Persia, but only if they joined the League of Corinth. By doing so, they promised to provide monetary support to Alexander.

## Siege of Halicarnassus



Map of Halicarnassus at the time of the siege

The [Siege of Halicarnassus](#) was undertaken in 334 BC. Alexander, who had a weak navy, was constantly being threatened by the Persian navy. It continuously attempted to provoke an engagement with Alexander, who would have none of it. Eventually, the Persian fleet sailed to [Halicarnassus](#), in order to establish a new defense. [Ada of Caria](#), the former queen of Halicarnassus, had been driven from her throne by her usurping [brother](#). When he died, Darius had appointed [Orontobates](#) satrap of Caria, which included Halicarnassus in its jurisdiction. On the approach of Alexander in 334 BC, Ada, who was in possession of the fortress of [Alinda](#), surrendered the fortress to him. Alexander and Ada appear to have formed an emotional connection. He called her "mother", finding her more amicable than his [megalomaniacal](#) snake-worshipping mother [Olympias](#). In return for his support, Ada gave Alexander gifts, and even sent him some of the best cooks in Asia Minor, realizing that Alexander had a sweet tooth. In the past, Alexander had referred to his biological father, Philip, as his "so-called" father, and preferred to think of the deity [Amon Zeus](#) as his actual father. Thus, he had finally managed to divorce himself from both of his biological parents.

Orontobates and [Memnon of Rhodes](#) entrenched themselves in Halicarnassus. Alexander had sent spies to meet with dissidents inside the city, who had promised to open the gates and allow Alexander to enter. When his spies arrived, however, the dissidents were nowhere to be found. A small battle resulted, and Alexander's army managed to break through the city walls. Memnon, however, now deployed his catapults, and Alexander's army fell back. Memnon then deployed his infantry, and shortly before Alexander would have received his first (and only) defeat, his infantry managed to break through the city walls, surprising the Persian forces and killing Orontobates. Memnon, realizing the city was lost, set fire to it and withdrew with his army. A strong wind caused the fire to destroy much of the city. Alexander then committed the government of Caria to Ada; and she, in turn, formally adopted Alexander as her son, ensuring that the rule of Caria passed unconditionally to him upon her eventual death.

## Syria

Shortly after the battle, Memnon died. His replacement was a Persian who had spent time in Macedonia called [Pharnabazus](#). He disrupted Alexander's supply routes by

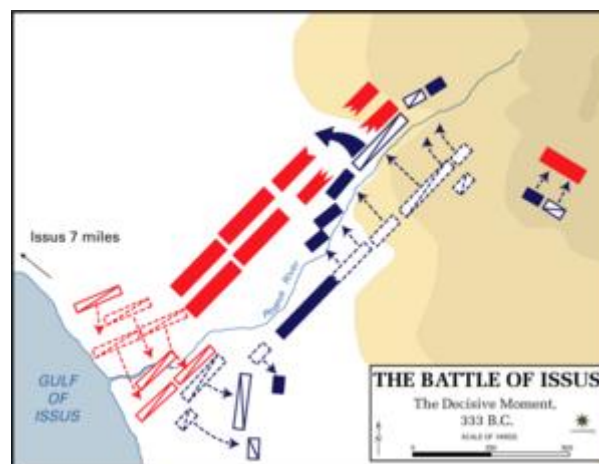


taking Aegean islands near the Hellespont and by fomenting rebellion in southern Greece. Meanwhile, Darius took the Persian army to intercept Alexander.

Alexander marched his army east through [Cappadocia](#), where, for a stretch of nearly 150 km (93 mi), there was no water. As his army approached [Mount Taurus](#), they found only one route through which to pass, which was a narrow [defile](#) called "The Gates". The defile was very narrow, and could have been easily defended. However, the Persian satrap of Cappadocia had an inflated view of his own abilities. He had been at the [Battle of the Granicus River](#), and had believed that Memnon's scorched Earth strategy would work here. He did not realize that the different circumstances of the terrain made that strategy useless. Had he mounted a credible defence of the defile, Alexander would have been easily repulsed. He left only a small contingent to guard the defile, and took his entire army to destroy the plain that lay ahead of Alexander's army. The Persian contingent that was supposed to guard the defile soon abandoned it, and Alexander passed through without any problems. Alexander supposedly said after this incident that he had never been so lucky in his entire career.

After reaching Mount Taurus, Alexander's army found a stream that flowed from the mountain with water that was ice cold. Not thinking, Alexander jumped into the stream, suffered a cramp and then a convulsion, and was pulled out nearly dead. He quickly developed [pneumonia](#), but none of his physicians would treat him, because they feared that, if he died, they would be held responsible. One physician named Philip, who had treated Alexander since he was a child, agreed to treat him. Although he soon fell into a coma, he eventually recovered.

## Battle of Issus



**Alexander's decisive attack**

[The Battle of Issus](#) took place in southern [Anatolia](#) on November 333 BC. After Alexander's forces defeated the Persians at the [Battle of the Granicus](#), Darius took personal charge of his army, gathered a large army from the depths of the empire, and maneuvered to cut the Greek line of supply, requiring Alexander to countermarch his forces, setting the stage for the battle near the mouth of the [Pinarus River](#) and south of the village of [Issus](#). Darius was apparently unaware that, by deciding to stage

the battle on a river bank, he was minimizing the numerical advantage his army had over Alexander's.

Initially, Alexander chose what was apparently unfavorable ground. This surprised Darius who mistakenly elected to hold the wrong position while Alexander instructed his [infantry](#) to take up a defensive posture. Alexander personally led the more elite Greek [Companion cavalry](#) against the Persian left up against the hills, and cut up the enemy on the less encumbering terrain, thereby generating a quick rout. After achieving a breakthrough, Alexander demonstrated he could do the difficult thing and held the cavalry in check after it broke the Persian right. Alexander then mounted his beloved horse [Bucephalus](#), took his place at the head of his [Companion cavalry](#), and led a direct assault against Darius. The horses that were pulling Darius' chariot were injured, and began tossing at the yoke. Darius, about to fall off his chariot, instead jumped off. He threw his royal diadem away, mounted a horse, and fled the scene. The Persian troops, realizing they had lost, either surrendered or fled with their hapless king. The Macedonian cavalry pursued the fleeing Persians for as long as there was light. As with most ancient battles, significant carnage occurred after the battle as pursuing Macedonians slaughtered their crowded, disorganized foe.

The invading troops led by Alexander were outnumbered more than 2:1, yet they defeated the army personally led by [Darius III](#) of [Achaemenid Persia](#). The battle was a decisive Macedonian victory and it marked the beginning of the end of Persian power. It was the first time the Persian army had been defeated with the King present on the field. Darius left his wife and an enormous amount of treasure behind as his army fled. The greed of the Macedonians helped to persuade them to keep going, as did the large number of Persian concubines and prostitutes they picked up in the battle. Darius, now fearing for both his throne and his life, sent a letter to Alexander in which he promised to pay a substantial ransom in exchange for the prisoners of war, and agreeing to a treaty of alliance with and the forfeiture of half of his empire to Alexander. Darius received a response which began "King Alexander to Darius". In the letter, Alexander blamed Darius for his father's death and claimed Darius was but a vulgar usurper, who planned to take Macedonia. He agreed to return the prisoners without ransom, but told Darius that he and Alexander were not equals, and that Darius was to henceforth address Alexander as "King of all Asia". Darius was also curtly informed that, if he wanted to dispute Alexander's claim to the Achaemenid throne, that he would have to stand and fight, and that if he instead fled, Alexander would pursue and kill him. By this, Alexander revealed for the first time that his plan was to conquer the entire Persian Empire

## Siege of Tyre



A naval action during the siege, Drawing by [André Castaigne](#)

The [Siege of Tyre](#) occurred in 332 BC when Alexander set out to conquer [Tyre](#), a strategic coastal base. Tyre was the site of the only remaining Persian port that did not capitulate to Alexander. Even by this point in the war, the Persian navy still posed a major threat to Alexander. Tyre, the largest and most important city-state of [Phoenicia](#), was located both on the Mediterranean coast as well as a nearby Island with two natural harbors on the landward side. At the time of the siege, the city held approximately 40,000 people, though the women and children were evacuated to [Carthage](#), an ancient Phoenician colony.

Alexander sent an envoy to Tyre, proposing a peace treaty, and asked to visit their city and offer sacrifices to their God [Melqart](#). The Tyrians politely told Alexander that their town was neutral in the war, and that allowing him to offer sacrifices to Melqart would be tantamount to recognizing him as their king. Alexander considered building a [causeway](#) that would allow his army to take the town by force. His engineers did not believe it would be possible to build such a massive structure, and so Alexander sent peace envoys once more to propose an alliance. The Tyrians believed this to be a sign of weakness, and so they killed the envoys and threw their bodies over the city wall. The dissent against Alexander's plans to take the city by force disappeared, and his engineers began to design the structure. Alexander began with an engineering feat that shows the true extent of his brilliance; as he could not attack the city from sea, he built a kilometer-long causeway stretching out to the island on a natural [land bridge](#) no more than two meters deep. Alexander then constructed two towers 150 feet high and moved them to the end of the causeway. The Tyrians, however, quickly devised a counterattack. They used an old horse transport ship, filling it with dried branches, pitch, sulfur, and various [other combustibles](#). They then lit it on fire, creating what we might call a primitive form of [napalm](#), and ran it up onto the causeway. The fire spread quickly, engulfing both towers and other siege equipment that had been brought up

This convinced Alexander that he would be unable to take Tyre without a navy. Fate would soon provide him with one. Presently, the Persian navy returned to find their home cities under Alexander's control. Since their allegiance was to their city, they were therefore Alexander's. He now had eighty ships. This coincided with the arrival of another hundred and twenty from [Cyprus](#), which had heard of his victories and wished to join him. Alexander then sailed on Tyre and quickly blockaded both ports with his superior numbers. He had several of the slower galleys, and a few barges, refit with battering rams, the only known case of battering rams being used on ships. Alexander started testing the wall at various points with his rams, until he made a small breach in the south end of the island. He then coordinated an attack across the breach with a bombardment from all sides by his navy. Once his troops forced their way into the city, they easily overtook the garrison, and quickly captured the city. Those citizens that took shelter in the temple of [Heracles](#) were pardoned by Alexander. It is said that Alexander was so enraged at the [Tyrians'](#) defense and the loss of his men that he destroyed half the city. Alexander granted pardon to the king and his family, whilst 30,000 residents and foreigners taken were sold into slavery. There was a family, though, that Alexander gave a very high position in his government, but the only contact he ever had with them was when he spent the night with the wife of the household.

## **Egypt**

### **Siege of Gaza**

The stronghold at [Gaza](#) was built on a hill and was heavily fortified.<sup>[21]</sup> The inhabitants of Gaza and their [Nabataean](#) allies did not want to lose the lucrative trade which was controlled by Gaza.



*Alexander Mosaic, showing Battle of Issus, from the House of the Faun, Pompeii*

[Batis](#), the commander of the fortress of Gaza, refused to surrender to Alexander. Though a eunuch, Batis was physically imposing and ruthless. After three unsuccessful assaults, the stronghold was finally taken by force,<sup>[22]</sup> but not before Alexander received a serious shoulder wound. When Gaza was taken, the male population was put to the sword and the women and children were sold into slavery. According to the Roman historian [Quintus Curtius Rufus](#), Batis was killed by Alexander in imitation of [Achilles'](#) treatment of the fallen [Hector](#). A rope was forced through Batis's ankles, probably between the ankle bone and the [Achilles tendon](#), and Batis was dragged alive by chariot beneath the walls of the city. Alexander, who admired courage in his enemies and might have been inclined to show mercy to the brave Persian general, was infuriated at Batis's refusal to kneel and by the enemy commander's haughty silence and contemptuous manner.

With Gaza taken, Alexander marched into Egypt. His entry was described as "closer to a triumphant procession than an invasion." They welcomed Alexander as their king, placed him on the throne of the [Pharaohs](#), giving him the crown of [Upper](#) and [Lower Egypt](#), and named him the incarnation of [Ra](#) and [Osiris](#). He set in motion plans to build [Alexandria](#), and, though future tax revenues would be channeled to him, he left Egypt under the management of Egyptians, which helped to win him their support.

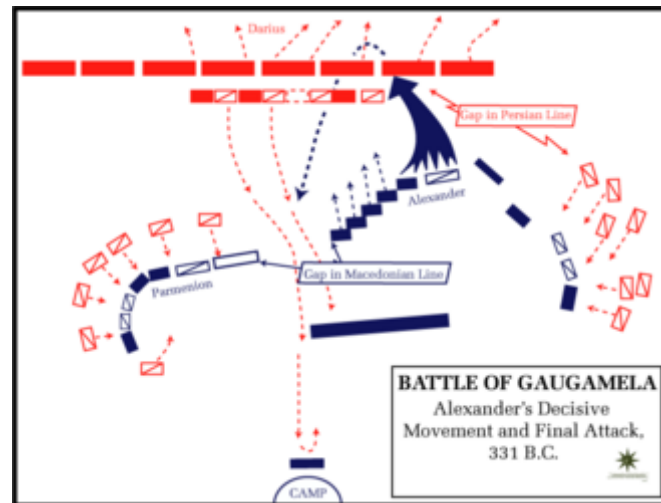
## **Mesopotamia**

### **Battle of Gaugamela**

The [Battle of Gaugamela](#) took place in 331 BC in what is now [Iraqi Kurdistan](#), possibly near [Dohuk](#), and resulted in a decisive victory for the Macedonians. After the Siege of Gaza, Alexander advanced from [Syria](#) towards the heart of the Persian Empire, crossing both the [Euphrates](#) and the [Tigris](#) rivers without any opposition. Darius was building up a massive army, drawing men from the far reaches of his empire, and



planned to use sheer numbers to crush Alexander. Though Alexander had conquered part of the Persian empire, it was still vast in area and in manpower reserves, and Darius could recruit more men than Alexander could dream of. Also present in the Persian army, a sign that the Persians were still very powerful, were the feared war elephants. While Darius had a significant advantage in number of soldiers, most of his troops were not as organized as Alexander's.



**Alexander's decisive attack**

The battle began with the Persians already present at the battlefield. Darius had recruited the finest cavalry from his eastern [satrapies](#). Darius placed himself in the center with his best infantry as was the tradition among Persian kings. The Macedonians were divided into two, with the right side of the army falling under the direct command of Alexander, and the left to [Parmenion](#). Alexander began by ordering his infantry to march in phalanx formation towards the center of the enemy line. Darius now launched his chariots, which were intercepted by the [Agrianians](#), and quickly rendered useless. Alexander, while leading the charge, formed his units into a giant wedge, which quickly smashed right into the weakened Persian center. Darius' charioteer was killed by a spear, and chaos rang out as everyone (incorrectly) thought it was Darius who had been killed. The Persian line then collapsed, and Darius fled. Darius escaped with a small core of his forces remaining intact, although the Bactrian cavalry and [Bessus](#) soon caught up with him. The remaining Persian resistance was quickly put down. In all, the Battle of Gaugamela was a disastrous defeat for the Persians, and possibly one of Alexander's finest victories.

## Persis



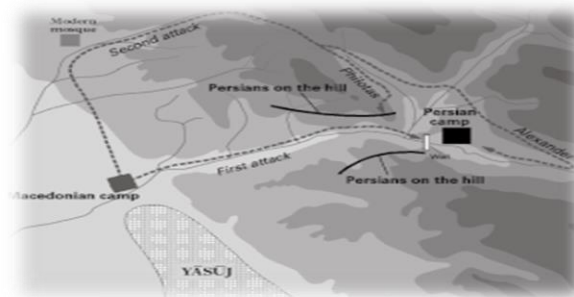
**Alexander's first victory over the Persian king Darius, depicted in medieval European style in the 15th century romance *The History of Alexander's Battles***

After the battle, Parmenion rounded up the Persian baggage train while Alexander and his own bodyguard chased after Darius in hopes of catching up. Substantial amounts of loot were gained following the battle, with 4,000 talents captured, as well as the King's personal chariot and bow. Darius planned to head further east, and raise another army to face Alexander while he and the Macedonians headed to one of the Persian capitals, [Babylon](#), and then to another, [Susa](#). There, Alexander found wealth that even he had never imagined possible. He paid his troops, and sent a sum of money six times the annual income of Athens to Greece, in order to put down a Spartan rebellion. Darius, meanwhile, dispatched letters to his eastern satrapies asking them to remain loyal. The satrapies, however, had other intentions, and quickly capitulated to Alexander.

Bessus fatally stabbed Darius, before fleeing eastwards. Darius was found by one of Alexander's scouts, moaning in pain. Darius, dying and chained to a baggage train being pulled by an ox, was lying next to a lone dog and his royal robes were covered in blood. He asked for water, and then, clutching the Macedonian soldier's hand, said that he was thankful that he would not die utterly alone and abandoned. Alexander, who may have felt genuinely saddened at Darius' death, buried Darius next to his Achaemenid predecessors in a full military funeral. Alexander claimed that, while dying, Darius had named Alexander as his successor to the Achaemenid throne and had asked Alexander to avenge his death, a striking irony since it was Alexander who had pursued him to his death. The Achaemenid Persian Empire is considered to have fallen with the death of Darius.

Alexander, viewing himself as the legitimate Achaemenid successor to Darius, viewed Bessus as a usurper to the Achaemenid throne, and eventually found and executed this 'usurper'. The majority of the existing satraps were to give their loyalty to Alexander, and be allowed to keep their positions. Alexander's troops now thought the war was over. Alexander was unsure how to deal with this, so he decided to scare them into submission. He gave a speech, arguing that their conquests were not secure, that the Persians did not want the Greeks to remain in their country, and that only the strength of Macedon could secure the country. The speech worked, and Alexander's troops agreed to remain with him. Alexander, now the Persian "King of Kings", adopted Persian dress and mannerisms, which, in time, the Greeks began to view as decadent and autocratic. They began to fear that Alexander, the king they had hero-worshiped, was turning into an eastern despot, although a young eunuch was eventually introduced to Alexander, and helped to keep his decadence in check.

## Battle of the Persian Gate



Map of the Persian Gate

In the winter of 330 BC, at the [Battle of the Persian Gate](#) northeast of today's [Yasuj](#) in [Iran](#), the Persian satrap [Ariobarzanes](#) led a [last stand](#) of the Persian forces. After the [Battle of Gaugamela](#) in present-day [Iraqi Kurdistan](#), Alexander had advanced to [Babylon](#) and [Susa](#). A [Royal Road](#) connected [Susa](#) with the more eastern capitals of [Persepolis](#) and [Pasargadae](#) in [Persis](#) (the Persian Empire had several "capitals"), and was the natural venue for Alexander's continued campaign. After the conquest of Susa, Alexander split the Macedonian army into two parts. Alexander's general, [Parmenion](#), took one half along the Royal Road, and Alexander himself took the route towards Persis. Passing into Persis required traversing the Persian Gates, a narrow mountain pass that lent itself easily to ambush.

Believing that, after his victory over the Uxians, he would not encounter any more enemy forces during his march, Alexander neglected to send scouts ahead of his vanguard, and thus walked into [Ariobarzanes](#)' ambush. Once the Macedonian army had advanced sufficiently into the narrow pass, the Persians rained down boulders on them from the northern slopes. From the southern slope, Persian archers and [catapults](#) launched their projectiles. Alexander's army initially suffered heavy casualties, losing entire platoons at a time. Ariobarzanes had hoped that defeating Alexander at the Persian Gates would allow the Persians more time to field another army, and possibly stop the Macedonian invasion altogether.

Ariobarzanes held the pass for a month, but Alexander succeeded in encircling the Persian army and broke through the Persian defenses. The defeat of Ariobarzanes's forces at the Persian Gate removed the last military obstacle between Alexander and Persepolis. Upon his arrival at the city of [Persepolis](#), Alexander appointed a general named Phrasaortes as successor of Ariobarzanes. Four months later, Alexander allowed the troops to loot Persepolis. A fire broke out and spread to the rest of the city. It is not clear if it had been a drunken accident, or a deliberate act of revenge for the burning of the [Acropolis of Athens](#) during the [Second Greco-Persian War](#).

## **Siege of the Sogdian Rock**

### **Bactria**

In 329 BC, Alexander launched the Siege of [Cyropolis](#) and fought against the Sakas in [Battle of Jaxartes](#). After Alexander defeated the last of the [Achaemenid Empire](#)'s forces in battle of Gabai against Spitamenes, and Coenus (Koinos), one Alexander the Great's generals in 328 BC, he began a new campaign to [Ariana](#) in 327 BC. He wanted to conquer the entire known world, which in Alexander's day, ended on the eastern end of India. Greeks of Alexander's day knew nothing of China, or any other lands east of [Bactria](#). The [Siege of the Sogdian Rock](#), a fortress located north of [Bactria](#) in [Sogdiana](#), occurred in 327 BC. [Oxyartes](#) of [Bactria](#) had sent his wife and daughters, one of whom was [Roxana](#), to take refuge in the fortress, as it was thought to be impregnable, and was provisioned for a long [siege](#). When Alexander asked the defenders to surrender, they refused, telling him that he would need "men with wings" to capture it. Alexander asked for volunteers, whom he would reward if they could climb the cliffs under the fortress. There were some 300 men who from previous sieges had gained experience in rock-climbing. Using tent-pegs and

strong [flaxen](#) lines, they climbed the cliff face at night, losing about 30 of their number during the ascent. In accordance with Alexander's orders, they signaled their success to the troops below by waving bits of [linen](#), and Alexander sent a herald to shout the news to the enemy's advanced posts that they might now surrender without further delay. The defenders were so surprised and demoralized by this that they surrendered. Alexander fell in love with Roxana, whom ancient historians call the "most beautiful woman in the world" (not an uncommon claim for an ancient queen), on sight and eventually married her. The story of the siege is told by the Roman historian [Arrian of Nicomedia](#), in [Anabasis](#) (section 4.18.4–19.6).

## Indian campaign



**Campaigns and landmarks of Alexander's invasion  
of the Indian subcontinent**

After the death of [Spitamenes](#) and his marriage to [Roxana](#) (Roshanak in [Bactrian](#)) to cement his relations with his new Central Asian satrapies, Alexander was finally free to turn his attention to the [Indian subcontinent](#). Alexander invited all the [chieftains](#) of the former satrapy of [Gandhara](#), in the north of what is now the [Jhelum River](#), [Pakistan](#), to come to him and submit to his authority. [Omphis](#), ruler of [Taxila](#), whose kingdom extended from the [Indus](#) to the [Hydaspes](#), complied, but the chieftains of some hill clans, including the [Aspasioi](#) and [Assakenoi](#) sections of the [Kambojas](#) (known in Indian texts also as [Ashvayanas](#) and [Ashvakayanas](#)), refused to submit.

In the winter of 327/326 BC, Alexander personally led a campaign against these clans; the [Aspasioi](#) of [Kunar valley](#), the Guraeans of the [Guraeus](#) valley, and the Assakenoi of the [Swat](#) and [Buner](#) valleys.<sup>[31]</sup> A fierce contest ensued with the Aspasioi in which Alexander himself was wounded in the shoulder by a dart but eventually the Aspasioi lost the fight. Alexander then faced the Assakenoi, who fought bravely and offered stubborn resistance to Alexander in the strongholds of Massaga, Ora and [Aornos](#). The fort of Massaga could only be reduced after several days of bloody fighting in which Alexander himself was wounded seriously in the ankle. According to [Curtius](#), "Not only did Alexander slaughter the entire population of Massaga, but also did he reduce its buildings to rubbles". A similar slaughter then followed at Ora, another stronghold of the Assakenoi. In the aftermath of Massaga and Ora, numerous [Assakenians](#) fled to



the fortress of [Aornos](#). Alexander followed close behind their heels and captured the strategic hill-fort after the fourth day of a bloody fight. This fight was the challenge Alexander was looking for, an army with huge elephants that were almost able to defeat Alexander.



**A painting by [Charles Le Brun](#) depicting Alexander and Porus (Puru) during the [Battle of the Hydaspes](#).**

After gaining control of the former Achaemenid [satrapy](#) of [Gandhara](#), including the city of [Taxila](#), Alexander advanced into [Punjab](#), where he engaged in battle against the regional king [Porus](#), whom Alexander defeated in the [Battle of the Hydaspes](#) in 326 BC, but was so impressed by the demeanor with which the king carried himself that he allowed Porus to continue governing his own kingdom as a satrap. Although victorious, Battle of the Hydaspes was also the most costly battle fought by the Macedonians.

East of Porus' kingdom, near the [Ganges River](#), was the powerful [Nanda Empire](#) of [Magadha](#). According to the Greek sources, the Nanda army was five times larger than the Macedonian army.<sup>[37]</sup> Fearing the prospects of facing the powerful Nanda Empire armies and exhausted by years of campaigning, his army mutinied at the [Hyphasis River](#), refusing to march further east. This river thus marks the easternmost extent of Alexander's conquests.

As for the Macedonians, however, their struggle with Porus blunted their courage and stayed their further advance into India. For having done all they could do to repulse an enemy who mustered only twenty thousand infantry and two thousand horse, they violently opposed Alexander when he insisted on crossing the river Ganges also, the width of which, as they learned, was thirty-two furlongs, its depth a hundred fathoms, while its banks on the further side were covered with multitudes of men-at-arms and horsemen and elephants. For they were told that the kings of the Ganderites and Praesii were awaiting them with eighty thousand horsemen, two hundred thousand footmen, eight thousand chariots, and six thousand fighting elephants.



**Asia in 323 BC, the [Nanda Empire](#) and [Gangaridai Empire](#) of Ancient India in relation to [Alexander's Empire](#) and neighbors**

Alexander spoke to his army and tried to persuade them to march further into India but [Coenus](#) pleaded with him to change his opinion and return, the men, he said, "longed to again see their parents, their wives and children, their homeland". Alexander, seeing the unwillingness of his men agreed and diverted. Along the way his army conquered the [Malli](#) clans (in modern-day [Multan](#)). In the territory of the Indus, he nominated his officer [Peithon](#) as a [satrap](#), a position he would hold for the next ten years until 316 BC, and in the [Punjab](#) he left [Eudemus](#) in charge of the army, at the side of the satrap [Porus](#) and [Taxiles](#). Eudemus became ruler of a part of the Punjab after their death. Both rulers returned to the West in 316 BC with their armies. In 321 BC, [Chandragupta Maurya](#) founded the [Maurya Empire](#) in India and overthrew the Greek satraps.

## Return from India

Alexander now sent much of his army to [Carmania](#) (modern southern [Iran](#)) with his general [Craterus](#), and commissioned a fleet to explore the [Persian Gulf](#) shore under his admiral [Nearchus](#), while he led the rest of his forces back to Persia by the southern route through the [Gedrosian Desert](#) (now part of southern [Iran](#) and [Makran](#) now part of [Pakistan](#)). According to Plutarch, during the 60-day march through the desert, Alexander lost three-quarters of his army to the harsh desert conditions along the way.

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# Battle Record

Outcome	Date	War	Action	Opponent/s	Type/ Country [Present Day]
Victory	2 August 338 BC	<a href="#">Philip II's submission of Greece</a>	<a href="#">Battle of Chaeronea</a>	<a href="#">Thebans, Athenians</a> and other Greek cities	Battle/Greece
Victory	335 BC	<a href="#">Balkan Campaign</a>	Battle of Mount Haemus	<a href="#">Getae, Thracians</a>	Battle/Bulgaria
Victory	335 BC	Balkan Campaign	<a href="#">Siege of Pelium</a>	<a href="#">Illyrians</a>	Siege/Albania
Victory	335 BC	Balkan Campaign	<a href="#">Battle of Thebes</a>	<a href="#">Thebans</a>	Battle/Greece
Victory	May 334 BC	Persian Campaign	<a href="#">Battle of the Granicus</a>	<a href="#">Achaemenid Empire</a>	Battle/Turkey
Victory	334 BC	Persian Campaign	<a href="#">Siege of Miletus</a>	<a href="#">Achaemenid Empire, Milesians</a>	Siege/Turkey
Victory	334 BC	Persian Campaign	<a href="#">Siege of Halicarnassus</a>	<a href="#">Achaemenid Empire</a>	Siege/Turkey
Victory	5 Nov 333 BC	Persian Campaign	<a href="#">Battle of Issus</a>	<a href="#">Achaemenid Empire</a>	Battle/Turkey

Victory	Jan–July 332 BC	Persian Campaign	<a href="#">Siege of Tyre</a>	<a href="#">Achaemenid Empire, Tyrians</a>	Siege/Lebanon
Victory	Oct 332 BC	Persian Campaign	<a href="#">Siege of Gaza</a>	<a href="#">Achaemenid Empire</a>	Siege/ Palestine
Victory	1 Oct 331 BC	Persian Campaign	<a href="#">Battle of Gaugamela</a>	<a href="#">Achaemenid Empire</a>	Battle/Iraq
Victory	Dec 331 BC	Persian Campaign	<a href="#">Battle of the Uxian Defile</a>	<a href="#">Uxians</a>	Battle/Iran
Victory	330 BC	Persian Campaign	<a href="#">Battle of the Persian Gate</a>	<a href="#">Achaemenid Empire</a>	Battle/Iran
Victory	329 BC	Persian Campaign	<a href="#">Siege of Cyropolis</a>	<a href="#">Sogdians</a>	Siege/ Turkmenistan
Victory	Oct 329 BC	Persian Campaign	<a href="#">Battle of Jaxartes</a>	<a href="#">Scythians</a>	Battle/ Uzbekistan
Victory	327 BC	Persian Campaign	<a href="#">Siege of the Sogdian Rock</a>	<a href="#">Sogdians</a>	Siege/ Uzbekiatan
Victory	May 327 - Mar 326 BC	<a href="#">Indian Campaign</a>	<a href="#">Cophen campaign</a>	<a href="#">Aspasians</a>	Expedition/Afghanistan/Pakistan
Victory	April 326 BC	<a href="#">Indian Campaign</a>	<a href="#">Siege of Aornos</a>	<a href="#">Áśvaka</a>	Siege/Pakistan
Victory	May 326 BC	<a href="#">Indian Campaign</a>	<a href="#">Battle of the Hydaspes</a>	<a href="#">Porus</a>	Battle/Pakistan
Victory	Nov 326 – Feb 325 BC	<a href="#">Indian Campaign</a>	<a href="#">Siege of Multan</a>	<a href="#">Malli</a>	Siege/Pakistan

## Military Tactics of ALEXANDER THE GREAT

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military\\_tactics\\_of\\_Alexander\\_the\\_Great](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_tactics_of_Alexander_the_Great)

The **military tactics of Alexander the Great** (356 BC - 323 BC) have been widely regarded as evidence that he was one of the greatest generals in history. During the [Battle of Chaeronea](#) (338 BC), won against the Athenian and Theban armies, and the battles of [Granicius](#) (334 BC) and of [Issus](#) (333 BC), won against the [Achaemenid Persian army](#) of [Darius III](#), Alexander employed the so-called "hammer and anvil" tactic. However, in the [Battle of Gaugamela](#) (331 BC), the Persians possessed an army vastly superior in numbers to the [Macedonian army](#). This tactic of encirclement by rapid shock units was not very feasible. Alexander had to compose and decide on an innovative combat formation for the time; he arranged his units in levels; he pretended to want to encircle the enemy in order to better divide it and thus opened a breach in its defensive lines.

### Troop composition and weapons

The origin of a [line infantry](#) with a [hoplitic](#) formation has to be traced back to the reign of [Archelaus](#).

...when Archelaus was king ... he organized his forces for war with a greater number of horses, weapons and resources than the other eight kings who had preceded him combined.

Before him, the only heavy infantry available to the [Kingdom of Macedonia](#) was supplied by the allied Greek cities.



**Macedonian phalanx. The Corinthian helmet was not as widespread as shown in the image.**

However its true creator was [Philip II](#), considered the inventor of the [Macedonian phalanx](#): a particularly effective heavy infantry, freed of a part of its defensive armament—the shield was reduced by a third, the cuirass abandoned—in favor of a longer [pike](#) (5.5 m or 18 ft), the [sarissa](#).

The length of the sarissa allowed to increase the number of [file](#) of [hoplites](#) that could fight. The sarissa consisted of a point at each extremity and was heavy (5.6 kg or 12 lb). At its base, a short iron point allowed it to be planted in the ground to stop the charge of enemy soldiers. This strategy was particularly effective in breaking the [cavalry charges](#) or the opposing [phalanxs](#). But the Macedonian phalanx was also fearsome in offensive use. The principle was to accumulate the maximum [kinetic energy](#) so that the impact of the [pike](#) would be as devastating as possible. To this end, the hoplites charged in compact group of 16 files so tightly packed that their masses were built up. The lightening of the equipment increased the speed of the phalanx.

The Macedonian phalanxes were from then on much more powerful than their classical counterparts and the impact was likely to bring down many ranks of enemy infantrymen. To increase this effect the sarissas were raised to the vertical during the [charge](#)—they formed a very tight net that stopped the projectiles—and set horizontal at the last moment, the pole impelled forward the shoulder of the infantryman creating a shock wave that propagated to the front rank and released a destructive impact on the enemy infantry, accumulating the energy of the driven mass of the hoplites with that of the lowering of the sarissas. Outside the tight formation of the phalanx, the sarissa caused discomfort during [marches](#) and therefore, it was divided into two parts that were united before the battle.

Another advantage of this [armament](#) was that it was less expensive, thus allowing to equip a large number of [soldiers](#). This military reform also had considerable political consequences, since it made it possible to integrate a considerably larger number of [Macedonians](#) in the defense of the kingdom and in its political life. At the end of Philip's reign, the number of Macedonians mobilizable in heavy infantry recruited on a territorial basis was estimated at 30,000.





Battle of Issus depicted on a mosaic from House of the Faun in Pompeii, currently on display at MANN.

Philip's army consisted of a core of professional infantrymen, the *pezhetairoi* (fellow footmen)—who constituted the royal guard—and a territorial levy.

Alexander's army consisted of 24,000 infantrymen divided into 12 *taxeis* of phalangites of about 1,500 men and three *quiliarchies* of 1000 *hypaspists*. It is necessary to add an undetermined number of archers and other light phalangites. Alexander extended the denomination of *pezhetairoi* to the group of *phalangites*, which explains the loyalty that the latter showed to him, and after his death, to his direct descendants.

The second masterpiece of the Macedonian army was the heavy cavalry recruited among the Macedonian nobility, called the Companion Cavalry (*hetairoi*). It consisted of 3,000 heavy, shock-capable cavalry, at the beginning of Alexander's campaigns, of which 1,800 accompanied him in Asia. It was divided into 12 *squadrons*, the first being the Royal Squadron (*basilikè ilè*). This squadron, also known as the ἀγέμα, *agêma*, 'that which leads', was 300 strong, while the other squadrons consisted of 250 lancers. "It is known that the Companion cavalry at Gaugamela were formed in eight squadrons or ilai (Arr. iii I 1.8), of which, one was the royal squadron *par excellence*, the *agêma* of the Companions."

The basic cavalry unit was an *ilē*, a squadron of 250 Companions commanded by an *ilarch*, and was divided into two *lochoi*, in turn divided into two *tetrarchies* of 60 cavalrymen, commanded by a *tetrarch*. Between 330 BC and 328 BC, the Companions were reformed into regiments (hipparchies) of 2-3 squadrons. In conjunction with this, each squadron was divided into two *lochoi*.

The tactical formation of the Companions was the wedge, adopted by Philip II from the *Scythians*. The squadron commander was at the point of this triangular formation. The formation was very manoeuvrable, with the squadron following its leader at the apex, "like a flight of cranes".

Each Companion had a servant in charge of looking after his horse and equipment. The cavalrymen owned their mount, and when they enlisted, they received the money needed to buy a quality one.

The Companion cavalry wore helmets, at first of the *Phrygian* type, painted with the colors of the squadron, until Alexander imposed the simpler *Boeotian* model. The helmets of officers were decorated with painted or metallic laurel wreaths, which indicated their rank. They wore a cuirass and boots, but no shield. They were armed

with a long spear (*xyston*) made of *cornelian* wood, provided with a point at either end, so that it could be used if it broke. As a secondary weapon, the Companion carried on the left side a sword (*kopis*, *makhaira* or *xyston*).

The tactical use of this cavalry was based on the *Achilles heel* of the phalanxes. Their vulnerability in the *flanks* and *rearguard*—it was practically impossible to pivot to stop a flank and rearguard attack due to the hindrance of the sarissas. The destructive effect of the phalanx was due to the *cohesion* of the hoplites during the impact, a cavalry attack from the flanks or from the rearguard was likely to disorganize the formation and make it vulnerable during the impact against another phalanx. It was the combination of phalanx and cavalry in the tactics of the hammer and the anvil that provided the decisive tactical advantage to the armies of Alexander the Great and that was the basis of the conquest of his immense empire.

Alexander, in his journey to the *Indus*, integrated into his army that of the defeated countries and was inspired by them to modify the equipment of his own forces.

## Hammer and Anvil Tactics

### **Principle**

This tactic could not be carried out unless the two armies had more or less the same number of troops, since it consisted of enclosing the opponent on the sides.

- The "anvil" corresponded to the *phalanx* and the *hypaspists* (the elite infantry) that pressed the adversary and contained it in an enclosed space.
- The "hammer" corresponded to the heavy *cavalry* of the *hetairoi* that intervened right after.

### **Phase 1: "The hammer"**

In order to drive the enemy forces away from their center, the Macedonian cavalry surrounded the flanks of the opposing army, systematically on the right flank which was commanded by Alexander himself, and then tried to make a gap and position themselves in the enemy lines, thus forcing their enemies to regroup.

#### *Army of Alexander the Great*

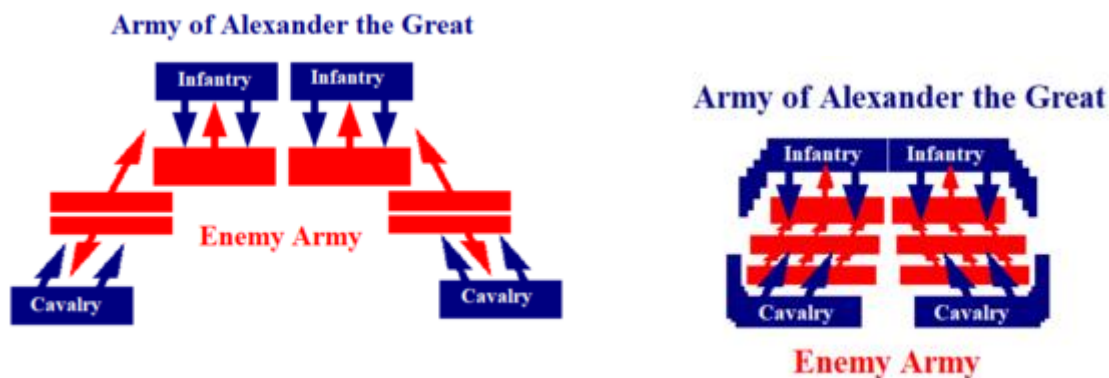


*Enemy Army*



### **Phase 2: "The anvil"**

Attacking from the flanks, the Macedonian cavalry surprised the enemy troops by the speed and force of its impact; in the center, the phalanx and the hypaspists advanced to open the second front. Once the enemy's way was closed, it was left in a trap. Generally, this caused great confusion because it could not be distinguished whether the units were dispersed or just poorly coordinated.



### **Battle of Gaugamela tactics**

The [Battle of Gaugamela](#) was the decisive confrontation between Alexander's army and that of [Darius III](#) (October 1, 331 BC). It is also known as the Battle of Arbela, due to its relative proximity (100 km or 60 mi) to the city of Arbela, today's [Erbil](#), in northern [Iraq](#).

### **Number of troops**

[Alexander the Great](#) had an army of 47,000 men, which was small compared to those of Darius—who according to modern historians assembled between 50,000 and 120,000 soldiers, maximum figure due to supply problems. The "hammer" and "anvil" tactics, which were the key to Alexander's victories until then, could no longer lead to victory, for it was indeed impossible to surround the entire Persian army.



## Battle development

### Levels disposition

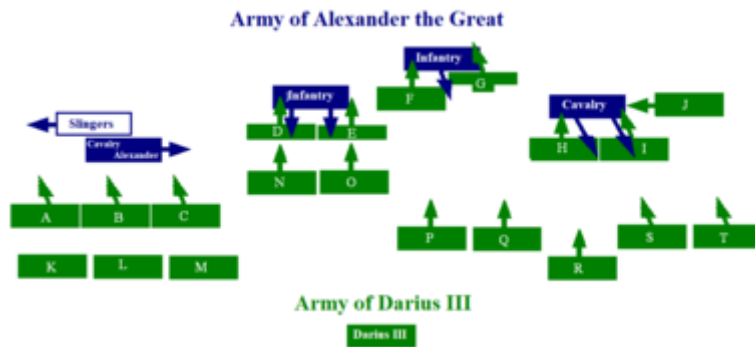
In order not to be surrounded by the innumerable Persian cavalry, Alexander decided to arrange his troops in levels, something completely innovative at the time. Alexander took command of the right wing of the companion cavalry (*hetairoi*), while Darius III remained in the center, in the middle of his troops. To cover as much ground as possible, Alexander decided to lengthen his right flank. He advanced at a trot to be closely followed by his battalions of elite sharpshooters (foot soldiers equipped with slings or short-range spears), which Alexander had as support troops. This tactic served to make the Persian army unaware of his presence. The phalangists and the cavalry of [Thessaly](#) and [Thrace](#), placed on the left wing under the command of [Parmenion](#), had to hold their position for as long as possible.



### Maximum ground coverage

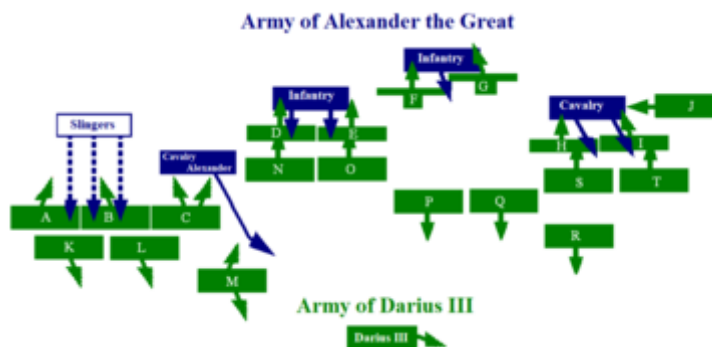
Alexander's plan worked: troops A, B, and C (letters arbitrarily assigned to allow for quick definition) blocked their way, thus creating a gap in the Persian army. Making a quick about-face, Alexander turned around to head for the gap. The slingers and lancers, hitherto covered by the right wing of the cavalry, were uncovered and carried out their mission. On the other fronts, the cavalry of the left wing and Alexander's infantry nevertheless resisted the onslaught of the Persian chariots on the Macedonian center.





## Darius retreat

The slingers and lancers attacked troops A, B and C to prevent them from performing their maneuvers. As these troops were destabilized, they lost formation. Alexander stepped into the breach and decided to go after Darius III, riding in his chariot and protected by the Royal Guard. When Darius saw what Alexander intended to do, he realized that he had no choice but to flee. His flight demoralized the troops. On the other fronts, the left wing and the phalanx began to show signs of weakness, since the troops attacking them did not hear the signal to retreat because they were in the midst of the heat of battle and far from the Persian king.



## Darius persecution and death

[\[edit\]](#)

As happened during the [Battle of Issus](#), Alexander almost captured Darius, but the cavalry of the left wing was very weakened. Alexander then decided to let Darius go in order to save his army. Taking advantage of the situation in which the Macedonians found themselves, the Persian troops fled the battlefield with their leaders. Alexander was assured of victory, even though at the beginning of the battle his position was not favorable, but he was disappointed that he had not been able to capture or kill the Great King.



Darius fled with his guard of [Immortals](#) and the [Bactriana](#) cavalry. Alexander and his companions pursued them for 120 km (75 mi). Seeing that Alexander was determined to capture Darius, a group of nobles, including the [Bessi](#), [Barsaentes](#) and [Nabarzanes satraps](#), took the Persian King hostage, so that they could make a pact with Alexander. However, they [decided to assassinate and abandon him](#) shortly before his arrival for fear that Alexander would not accept such a negotiation. Following this victory, Alexander was crowned as [King of Asia](#) in a lavish ceremony held in [Arbela](#) and upon his arrival in [Babylon](#).

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## Alexander the Great

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander\\_the\\_Great](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_the_Great)

Alexander the Great	
<i>Basileus</i>	
	
Alexander in the <i>Alexander Mosaic</i>	
King of Macedon	
Reign	336–323 BC
Predecessor	<a href="#">Philip II</a>
Successor	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="#">Alexander IV</a></li><li><a href="#">Philip III</a></li></ul></div>
Hegemon of the Hellenic League	
Reign	336–323 BC
Predecessor	Philip II
Successor	<a href="#">Demetrius I of Macedon</a>
Pharaoh of Egypt	

<b>Reign</b>	332–323 BC
<b>Predecessor</b>	<a href="#">Darius III</a>
<b>Successor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alexander IV</li> <li>• Philip III</li> </ul>
<b><a href="#">King of Persia</a></b>	
<b>Reign</b>	330–323 BC
<b>Predecessor</b>	Darius III
<b>Successor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alexander IV</li> <li>• Philip III</li> </ul>
•	
<b>Born</b>	20 or 21 July 356 BC <a href="#">Pella</a> , <a href="#">Macedon</a>
<b>Died</b>	10 or 11 June 323 BC (aged 32) <a href="#">Babylon</a> , <a href="#">Mesopotamia</a>
<b>Spouse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Roxana</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Stateira</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Parysatis</a></li> </ul>
<b><a href="#">Issue</a></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Alexander IV</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Heracles</a><sup>[a]</sup></li> </ul>
<b><a href="#">Greek</a></b>	Ἀλέξανδρος <sup>[b]</sup>
<b><a href="#">Dynasty</a></b>	<a href="#">Argead</a>
<b>Father</b>	<a href="#">Philip II of Macedon</a>
<b>Mother</b>	<a href="#">Olympias of Epirus</a>
<b>Religion</b>	<a href="#">Ancient Greek religion</a>

**Alexander III of Macedon** ([Ancient Greek](#): [Ἀλέξανδρος](#), [romanized](#): *Alexandros*; 20/21 July 356 BC – 10/11 June 323 BC), most commonly known as **Alexander the Great**, was a king of the [ancient Greek](#) kingdom of [Macedon](#).<sup>[d]</sup> He succeeded his father [Philip II](#) to the throne in 336 BC at the age of 20 and spent most of his ruling years conducting a lengthy [military campaign](#) throughout [Western Asia](#), [Central Asia](#), parts of [South Asia](#), and [Egypt](#). By the age of 30, he had created one of the [largest empires](#) in history, stretching from [Greece](#) to northwestern [India](#). He was undefeated in battle and is widely considered to be one of history's greatest and most successful military commanders.

Until the age of 16, Alexander was tutored by [Aristotle](#). In 335 BC, shortly after his assumption of kingship over Macedon, he [campaigned in the Balkans](#) and reasserted control over [Thrace](#) and parts of [Illyria](#) before marching on the city of [Thebes](#), which was [subsequently destroyed in battle](#). Alexander then led the [League of Corinth](#), and used his authority to

launch the [pan-Hellenic project](#) envisaged by his father, assuming leadership over all [Greeks](#) in their conquest of [Persia](#).

In 334 BC, he invaded the [Achaemenid Persian Empire](#) and began [a series of campaigns](#) that lasted for 10 years. Following his conquest of [Asia Minor](#), Alexander broke the power of Achaemenid Persia in a series of decisive battles, including those at [Issus](#) and [Gaugamela](#); he subsequently overthrew [Darius III](#) and conquered the Achaemenid Empire in its entirety. After the fall of Persia, the [Macedonian Empire](#) held a vast swath of territory between the [Adriatic Sea](#) and the [Indus River](#). Alexander endeavored to reach the "ends of the world and the Great Outer Sea" and [invaded India](#) in 326 BC, achieving an important victory over [Porus](#), an ancient Indian king of present-day [Punjab](#), at the [Battle of the Hydaspes](#). Due to the mutiny of his homesick troops, he eventually turned back at the [Beas River](#) and later died in 323 BC in [Babylon](#), the city of [Mesopotamia](#) that he had planned to establish as his empire's capital. [Alexander's death](#) left unexecuted an additional series of planned military and mercantile campaigns that would have begun with a Greek invasion of [Arabia](#). In the years following his death, [a series of civil wars](#) broke out across the Macedonian Empire, eventually leading to its disintegration at the hands of the [Diadochi](#).

With his death marking the start of the [Hellenistic period](#), Alexander's legacy includes the [cultural diffusion](#) and [syncretism](#) that his conquests engendered, such as [Greco-Buddhism](#) and [Hellenistic Judaism](#). [He founded more than twenty cities](#), with the most prominent being the city of [Alexandria](#) in Egypt. Alexander's settlement of [Greek colonists](#) and the resulting spread of [Greek culture](#) led to the overwhelming dominance of [Hellenistic civilization](#) and influence as far east as the [Indian subcontinent](#). The Hellenistic period developed through the [Roman Empire](#) into modern [Western culture](#); the [Greek language](#) became the *lingua franca* of the region and was the predominant language of the [Byzantine Empire](#) until its collapse in the mid-15th century AD.

Alexander became legendary as a classical hero in the mould of [Achilles](#), featuring prominently in the historical and mythical traditions of both Greek and non-Greek cultures. His military achievements and unprecedented enduring successes in battle made him the measure against which many later military leaders would compare themselves, and his tactics remain a significant subject of study in [military academies](#) worldwide. Legends of Alexander's exploits coalesced into the third-century [Alexander Romance](#) which, in the premodern period, went through over one hundred



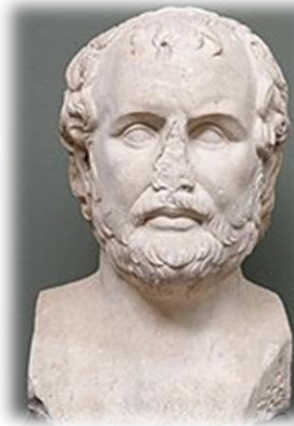
recensions, translations, and derivations and was translated into almost every European vernacular and every language of the Islamic world. After the [Bible](#), it was the most popular form of European literature.



**Archaeological site of Pella, Greece,  
Alexander's birthplace**



**Roman medallion depicting Olympias,  
Alexander's mother**



**Philip II of Macedon, Alexander's father**



**Pausanias assassinates Philip II,  
Alexander's father, during his  
procession into the theatre**



**The Macedonian phalanx at the "Battle of the  
Carts" against the Thracians in 335 BC**



***Alexander Cuts the Gordian  
Knot* by Jean-Simon Berthélemy (1767)**



*Entry of Alexander into Babylon* by Charles Le Brun (1665)



Site of the Persian Gate in modern-day Iran; the road was built in the 1990s.



Alexander's invasion of the Indian subcontinent



The Untold Story of The Gordian Knot

# Gordian knot

<https://www.history.com/news/what-was-the-gordian-knot>

The term "**Gordian knot**," commonly used to describe a complex or unsolvable problem, can be traced back to a legendary chapter in the life of Alexander the Great.

As the story goes, in 333 B.C. the Macedonian conqueror marched his army into the Phrygian capital of Gordium in modern day Turkey. Upon arriving in the city, he encountered an ancient wagon, its yoke tied with what one Roman historian later described as "several knots all so tightly entangled that it was impossible to see how they were fastened."

Phrygian tradition held that the wagon had once belonged to Gordius, the father of the celebrated King Midas. An oracle had declared that any man who could unravel its elaborate knots was destined to become ruler of all of Asia.

According to the ancient chronicler Arrian, the impetuous Alexander was instantly "seized with an ardent desire" to untie the Gordian knot. After wrestling with it for a time and finding no success, he stepped back from the mass of gnarled ropes and proclaimed, "It makes no difference how they are loosed." He then drew his sword and sliced the knot in half with a single stroke.



*Alexander Cutting the Gordian Knot.*



In another version of the legend, he simply pulled out a lynchpin running through the yoke, loosening the knot enough that he was able to unfasten it. Whatever method he used, the young king was immediately hailed as having outsmarted the ancient puzzle. That same night, Gordium was rocked by a thunder and lightning storm, which Alexander and his men took as a sign that he had pleased the gods. True to the prophecy, he went on to conquer Egypt and large swaths of Asia before his death at age 32.

Thanks to the enduring popularity of the Alexander fable, the phrase "Gordian knot" has entered the lexicon as shorthand for an intricate or intractable obstacle. One of its earliest appearances came in the Shakespeare play Henry V, where the titular character is praised for his ability to "unloose" the Gordian knots of politics. Likewise, the saying "cutting the Gordian knot" is now commonly used to describe a creative or decisive solution to a seemingly insurmountable problem.





# TIMELINE

<https://www.thoughtco.com/alexander-the-great-study-guide-116811>



Alexander fighting a lion mosaic.

By

**N.S. Gill**

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**LEARN ABOUT OUR EDITORIAL PROCESS**

Updated on September 13, 2024

Alexander the Great, King of Macedon from 336 - 323 B.C., may claim the [title of the greatest military leader](#) the world has ever known. His empire spread from Gibraltar to the Punjab, and he made Greek, the language that helped spread early Christianity, the lingua franca of his world.

After his father, Philip II, unified most of Greece's reluctant city-states, Alexander continued those conquests by taking Thrace and Thebes (in the area of Greece), Syria, Phoenicia, Mesopotamia, Assyria, Egypt, and the Punjab, in northern India.

## Assimilated and Adopted Foreign Customs

Alexander is thought to have founded more than 70 cities throughout the Mediterranean region and east to India, spreading trade and Greek culture wherever he went. Along with advancing Hellenism, he sought to interbreed with the native populations and set an example for his followers by marrying local women. This required adaptation to the local customs as we see clearly in Egypt, where his successor Ptolemy's descendants adopted the local custom of pharaonic marriage to siblings (although, in his excellent [Antony and Cleopatra](#), Adrian Goldsworthy says this was done for other reasons than the Egyptian example). As was true in Egypt, it was true in the East (among Alexander's Seleucid successors) that Alexander's goal of racial fusion met resistance. The Greeks remained dominant.

## Larger-Than-Life

Alexander's story is told in terms of oracles, myths, and legends, including his taming of the wild horse Bucephalus and pragmatic approach to severing the Gordian Knot.

He was and still is compared with Achilles, the Greek hero of the [Trojan War](#). Both men chose a life that guaranteed immortal fame even at the cost of an early death. Unlike Achilles, who was subordinate to the great king Agamemnon, Alexander was in charge with a personality that kept his army on the march while holding together diverse—geographically and culturally—domains.

## Problems With His Men

Alexander's Macedonian troops weren't always sympathetic to their leader. His apparent adoption of Persian customs antagonized his men who were not apprised of his motives. Did Alexander want to become a Great King like [Darius](#) or be worshiped as a living god? When, in 330, Alexander sacked Persepolis, Plutarch says his men thought it a sign Alexander was ready to return home. They learned otherwise and some threatened to mutiny. In 324, on the banks of the [Tigris River](#), at Opis, Alexander executed the leaders of a mutiny. Soon the disaffected soldiers, thinking they were being replaced with Persians, asked Alexander to accept them back. [Reference: Pierre Briant's *Alexander the Great and His Empire*]

## Evaluation

Alexander was ambitious, capable of fierce anger, ruthless, willful, an innovative strategist, and charismatic. People continue to debate his motives and capabilities.

## Death

Alexander died suddenly, in Babylon, on June 11, 323. The cause of death is not known, but some say it could have been poison (possibly arsenic) or natural causes. Alexander the Great was 33.

## Facts About Alexander the Great

Use Your judgment: Remember that [Alexander the Great](#) is a larger-than-life figure so what people have attributed to him could be propaganda mixed with fact.

1. **Birth**

Alexander was born around July 19 or 20, 356 B.C.

2. **Parents**

Alexander was the son of King Philip II of Macedon and [Olympias](#), the daughter of King Neoptolemus I of Epirus. Olympias was not Philip's only wife and there was much conflict between Alexander's parents. There are other contenders for the father of Alexander, but they're much less believable.

3. **Education**

Alexander was tutored by Leonidas (possibly his uncle) and the [great Greek philosopher Aristotle](#) (Hephaestion is thought to have been educated along with Alexander).

4. **Who Was Bucephalus?**

During his youth, Alexander tamed the [wild horse Bucephalus](#). Later, when his beloved horse died, Alexander renamed a city in India for Bucephalus.

5. **The Promise Shown When Alexander Was Regent**

In 340, while his father Philip went off to fight rebels, Alexander was made regent in Macedonia. During Alexander's regency, the Maedi of northern Macedonia revolted. Alexander put down the revolt and renamed their city Alexandropolis.

6. **His Early Military Prowess**

In August 338, Alexander showed his mettle helping Philip win the Battle of Chaeronea.

7. **Alexander Succeeds His Father to the Throne**

In 336, his father Philip was assassinated, and Alexander the Great became ruler of Macedonia.

8. **Alexander Was Wary of Those Around Him**

Alexander had potential rivals executed to secure the throne.

9. **His Wives**

Alexander the Great had three probable wives: Roxane, Statira, Parysatis

10. **Alexander Solved the Gordian Knot**

They say that when [Alexander the Great](#) was in Gordium (modern Turkey), in 333 B.C., he undid the Gordian Knot. This is the fabled knot tied by the father of the legendary ass-eared King Midas. The same "they" said that the person who untied the Gordian Knot would rule all of Asia. Alexander the Great may have undone the knot by the simple expedience of slashing through it with a sword.

11. **Death of Alexander** In 323 B.C. Alexander the Great returned from the area of modern India and Pakistan to Babylonia, where he became ill suddenly, and died at age 33. We don't now why he died. It could have been disease or poison.

12. **Who Were Alexander's Successors?**

The successors of Alexander are known as the [Diadochi](#).

## Timeline of Alexander the Great

July 356 B.C.	Born at Pella, Macedonia, to <a href="#">King Philip II</a> and Olympias
338 B.C. August	Battle of Chaeronea
336 B.C.	Alexander becomes ruler of Macedonia
334 B.C.	Wins Battle of the Granicus River against Darius III of Persia
333 B.C.	Wins <a href="#">Battle at Issus</a> against Darius
332 B.C.	Wins siege of Tyre; attacks Gaza, which falls
331 B.C.	Founds Alexandria. Wins <a href="#">Battle of Gaugamela</a> against Darius
330 B.C.	Sacks and burns Persepolis; trial and execution of Philotas; assassination of Parmenion
329 B.C.	Crosses Hindu Kush; goes to Bactria and crosses the Oxus river and then to Samarkand.
328 B.C.	Kills Black Cleitus for an insult at Samarkand
327 B.C.	Marries Roxane; begins march to India
326 B.C.	Wins Battle of river Hydaspes against Porus; Bucephalus dies
324 B.C.	Marries Stateira and Parysatis at Susa; Troops mutiny at Opis; Hephaestion dies
June 11, 323 B.C.	Dies at Babylon in the palace of <a href="#">Nebuchadnezzar II</a>

(☺)(☺)(☺)(☺)(☺)

## *Alexander (2004 film)*

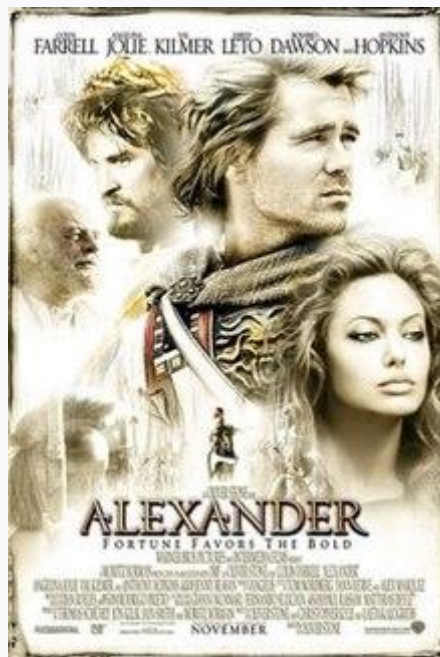
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander\\_\(2004\\_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_(2004_film))

**Alexander** is a 2004 epic historical drama film based on the life of the ancient Macedonian general and king Alexander the Great. It was co-written and directed by Oliver Stone and starred Colin Farrell. The film's original screenplay was derived in part from the book *Alexander the Great*, published in 1973 by the University of Oxford historian Robin Lane Fox. After release, while it performed well in Europe, the American critical reaction was negative. It grossed \$167 million worldwide against a \$155 million budget, thus making it a commercial failure.



Four versions of the film exist, the initial theatrical cut and three home video director's cuts: the "Director's Cut" in 2005, the "Final Cut" in 2007, and the "Ultimate Cut" in 2014. The two earlier DVD versions of *Alexander* ("director's cut" version and the theatrical version) sold over 3.5 million copies in the United States. Oliver Stone's third version, *Alexander Revisited: The Final Cut* (2007), sold nearly a million copies and became one of the highest-selling catalog items from Warner Bros (as of 2012).

## Alexander



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	<a href="#">Oliver Stone</a>
Screenplay by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oliver Stone</li><li>• Christopher Kyle</li><li>• <a href="#">Laeta Kalogridis</a></li></ul>
Based on	<i>Alexander the Great</i> by <a href="#">Robin Lane Fox</a>
Produced by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thomas Schühly</li><li>• <a href="#">Jon Kilik</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Iain Smith</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Moritz Borman</a></li></ul>
Starring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Colin Farrell</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Angelina Jolie</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Val Kilmer</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Jared Leto</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Rosario Dawson</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Anthony Hopkins</a></li></ul>
Cinematography	<a href="#">Rodrigo Prieto</a>

<b>Edited by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas J. Nordberg</li> <li>• Yann Hervé</li> <li>• Alex Marquez</li> </ul>
<b>Music by</b>	<a href="#">Vangelis</a>
<b>Production companies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Intermedia Films</a></li> <li>• Ixtlan Productions</li> <li>• <a href="#">France 3 Cinéma</a></li> <li>• Pacific Film</li> <li>• <a href="#">Egmond Film &amp; Television</a></li> <li>• IMF Internationale Medien und Film GmbH &amp; Co. 3 Produktions KG</li> </ul>
<b>Distributed by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Warner Bros. Pictures</a> (North America/United Kingdom/Italy)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Constantin Film</a> (Germany)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Pathé Distribution</a> (France)</li> <li>• A-Film Distribution (Netherlands)</li> </ul>
<b>Release dates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• November 16, 2004 (<a href="#">Hollywood</a>)</li> <li>• November 24, 2004 (United States)</li> <li>• December 23, 2004 (Germany/Netherlands)</li> <li>• January 5, 2005 (France)</li> <li>• January 14, 2005 (Italy)</li> </ul>
<b>Running time</b>	175 minutes <sup>[1]</sup> (see <a href="#">Alternative versions</a> )
<b>Countries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Germany</li> <li>• France</li> <li>• Italy</li> <li>• Netherlands</li> <li>• United Kingdom</li> <li>• United States</li> </ul>
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Budget</b>	\$155 million
<b>Box office</b>	\$167.3 million

## Plot

Around 285 BC, [Ptolemy I Soter](#), [basileus](#) and [pharaoh](#) of [Ptolemaic Egypt](#), narrates the life of Alexander. Alexander grows up with his mother [Olympias](#) and his tutor [Aristotle](#), where he finds interest in love, honor, music, exploration, poetry and military [combat](#). His relationship with his father, [Philip II of Macedon](#), is destroyed when Philip marries [Attalus](#)'s niece, [Eurydice](#). Alexander insults Philip after disowning Attalus as his [kinsman](#), which results in Alexander's banishment from Philip's palace.

After Philip is [assassinated](#), Alexander becomes King of Macedonia. Ptolemy mentions Alexander's punitive campaign in which he razes [Thebes](#), also referring to the later burning of [Persepolis](#), then gives an overview of Alexander's west-Persian campaign, including his declaration as the son of [Zeus](#) by the [Oracle](#) of [Amun](#) at [Siwa Oasis](#), his great battle against the Persian Emperor [Darius III](#) in the [Battle of Gaugamela](#), and his eight-year campaign across Asia.

Alexander's most private relationships are these with his childhood friend [Hephaestion](#), [Bagoas](#), and later his wife, [Roxana](#). Hephaestion compares

Alexander to [Achilles](#), to which Alexander replies that Hephaestion must be his [Patroclus](#) (Achilles's lover). When Hephaestion mentions that Patroclus died first, Alexander pledges that, if Hephaestion should die first, he will follow him into the afterlife (as Achilles had done for Patroclus). Hephaestion shows extensive jealousy when Alexander marries Roxana, going so far as to attempt to keep her away from him after Alexander murders [Cleitus the Black](#) in India during a drunken rage.

After initial objection from his soldiers, Alexander convinces them to join him in his final and bloodiest battle, the [Battle of Hydaspes](#). He is severely injured with an arrow but survives and is celebrated. Later on, Hephaestion succumbs to [typhus](#) carried with him from India, and dies, deeply saddening Alexander. During a [symposium](#) in [Babylon](#), Alexander falls unconscious after downing a large bowl of wine. On his deathbed, Bagoas grieves as [Alexander's generals](#) begin to split up his kingdom and [fight over the ownership of his body](#).

In 285 BC, Ptolemy admits to his scribe that he, along with all the other officers, had indeed poisoned Alexander just to spare themselves from any future conquests or consequences. However, he has it recorded that Alexander died due to illness compounding his overall weakened condition. He then goes on to end his memoirs with praise to Alexander.

Ptolemy's memoirs of Alexander were eventually burned, lost forever with other scrolls of the [Library of Alexandria](#) by the end of the [Roman Empire](#).

## Cast

- [Colin Farrell](#) as [Alexander](#)
  - Jessie Kamm as child Alexander
  - [Connor Paolo](#) as young Alexander
- [Angelina Jolie](#) as [Queen Olympias](#)
- [Val Kilmer](#) as [King Philip II](#)
- [Anthony Hopkins](#) as old [Ptolemy](#)
  - [Elliot Cowan](#) as adult Ptolemy
  - Robert Earley as young Ptolemy
- [Jared Leto](#) as [Hephaestion](#)
  - Patrick Carroll as young Hephaestion
- [Rosario Dawson](#) as [Roxana](#)
- [Christopher Plummer](#) as [Aristotle](#)
- [David Bedella](#) as scribe Cadmus
- [Fiona O'Shaughnessy](#) as nurse
- [Brian Blessed](#) as wrestling trainer
- [Gary Stretch](#) as [Cleitus the Black](#)
- [John Kavanagh](#) as [Parmenion](#)
- [Nick Dunning](#) as [Attalus](#)
- [Marie Meyer](#) as [Eurydice](#)
- [Mick Lally](#) as horse seller
- [Joseph Morgan](#) as [Philotas](#)
- [Ian Beattie](#) as [Antigonos](#)
- [Jonathan Rhys Meyers](#) as [Cassander](#)

- Morgan Christopher Ferris as young Cassander
  - [Denis Conway](#) as [Nearchus](#)
    - Peter Williamson as young Nearchus
  - [Neil Jackson](#) as [Perdiccas](#)
    - Alec Gordon as young Perdiccas
  - Garrett Lombard as [Leonnatus](#)
  - [Chris Aberdein](#) as [Polyperchon](#)
  - [Rory McCann](#) as [Craterus](#)
  - [Tim Pigott-Smith](#) as omen reader
  - [Raz Degan](#) as [Darius](#)
  - [Erol Sander](#) as Persian prince
  - Stéphane Ferrara as [Bessus](#), Bactrian commander
  - [Tadhg Murphy](#) as dying soldier
  - [Francisco Bosch](#) as [Bagoas](#)
  - [Annelise Hesme](#) as [Stateira](#)
  - [Toby Kebbell](#) as [Pausanias of Orestis](#)
  - [Laird Macintosh](#) as Greek officer
  - [Féodor Atkine](#) as [Oxyartes](#), Roxana's father
  - [Bin Bunluerit](#) as [King Porus](#) of India
  - Jaran Ngramdee as Indian prince
  - [Brian McGrath](#) as doctor
  - [Oliver Stone](#) (*uncredited*) as Macedonian soldier at Zeus Statue
- **Controversies**
    - A group of 25 Greek lawyers initially threatened to file a [lawsuit](#) against both Stone and the [Warner Bros](#) film studio for what they claimed was an inaccurate portrayal of history. "We are not saying that we are against [gays](#)," said Yannis Varnakos, "but we are saying that the production company should make it clear to the audience that this film is pure fiction and not a true depiction of the life of Alexander". After an advance screening of the film, the lawyers announced that they would not pursue such a course of action.
    - At the British premiere of the film, Stone blamed "raging [fundamentalism](#) in morality" for the film's failure at the US box office. He argued that American critics and audiences had blown the issue of Alexander's sexuality out of proportion. The criticism prompted him to make significant changes to the film for its DVD release, whose cover characterizes them as making it "faster paced, more action-packed".
  - **Historical accuracy**
    - In the making of *Alexander*, Oliver Stone had consulted the Oxford historian [Robin Lane Fox](#), as well as his colleagues and other British experts. Stone also consulted [CUNY Queens College](#) historian John Maxwell O'Brien (in part from his book *Alexander the Great: The Invisible Enemy: A Biography*) though he remains uncredited in the film.
    - The movie has attracted both praise as well as criticism from numerous ancient historians. The general opinion has been that while the movie shows remarkable historical accuracy in several aspects, it is above all a dramatization

and includes both stylistic changes as well as some inaccuracies, particularly regarding the depiction of Persians and eastern peoples in general.

- **Historical praise**



*Battle of Alexander versus Darius, painted by Pietro da Cortona, c. 1650*

- Particularly praiseworthy has been its depiction of the [battle of Gaugamela](#).<sup>[11]</sup> [Eugene N. Borza](#), a professor emeritus focusing on [Ancient Macedon](#) has said: "The re-enactment of the enormously complex battle of Gaugamela is impressive, not only reproducing several of the main events of the conflict, but indicating how difficult it was for large armies to operate on a desert plain made opaque by dust and chaotic by the clash of arms," and praised its depiction of the [Macedonian phalanx](#).<sup>]</sup> [Roel Konijnendijk](#), a Dutch historian of Ancient Greek warfare, called it, despite some of the minor inaccuracies, "in terms of ancient warfare [...] the most accurate depiction that you will find anywhere."
- [Eugene N. Borza](#) had also praised the detailed setpieces depicting the Achaemenid Babylon as "spectacular," such as the interior and exterior designs and noting how the trinkets and jewelry were based on actual recent archaeological findings.
- The early-Greek-history [ethnographer](#)/analyst Angelos Chaniotis, of the [Institute for Advanced Study](#) at [Princeton](#) — in summarizing the first three versions of the film as "a dramatisation, [rather than] a documentary" — insists that, despite its imperfections, historians and history students "have a lot to learn" by "studying and reflecting upon" Stone's film. He concludes that, as a motion picture that "captures the [Zeitgeist](#)" (spirit of the times) of the "ancient Greek" era, "no film... can rival Oliver Stone's *Alexander*."
- **Historical criticism**



•  
*Section of the [Alexander Mosaic](#) featuring [Darius III](#), c. 120–100 BC*

- According to [Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones](#), Professor of Ancient History at [Cardiff University](#): "Oliver Stone's movie *Alexander* (2004) displays all the



familiar [Orientalist](#) notions about the inferiority and picturesqueness of Eastern societies. So much so, indeed, that in terms of its portrayal of East–West relationships, *Alexander* has to be seen as a stale cultural statement and a worn-out reflection of the continuing Western preoccupation with an imaginary exotic Orient."

- Persian history expert [Kaveh Farrokh](#) questioned the omission of the burning of [Persepolis](#) by Alexander and observed that, in the film, "Greek forces are typically shown as very organised, disciplined, and so on, and what's very disturbing is, when the so-called Persians are shown confronting the Macedonians, you see them [turbaned](#). Turbans are not even a Persian item [...] Their armies are totally disorganized. What is not known is that the Persians actually had uniforms. They marched in discipline [sic], and music was actually used..."
- **Stone's response to criticism**
- Stone has, in his various commentaries in the film's DVD, [\[citation needed\]](#) defended the most glaring historical issues in regard to Persian and Indian history, by saying he had no resources to portray accurately a multitude of battles at the expense of storytelling. He described in detail explaining how he merged all the major aspects of the [Battle of the Granicus](#) and [Battle of Issus](#) into the [Battle of Gaugamela](#), as well as heavily simplifying the [Battle of the Hydaspes](#) into a straightforward clash, while merging the near-death of Alexander with the [siege of Malli](#). In a taped discussion at the [Oxford Union](#), Stone stated about his presentation of the Battle of Gaugamela: "I've been told by many historians that the battle is as accurate as they've ever seen in any movie, ever, to what they think happened at the battle".
- **Reception**
- **Box office**
- *Alexander* was released in 2,445 venues on 24 November 2004 and earned \$13.7 million in its opening weekend, ranking sixth in the North American box office and second among the week's new releases. Upon closing on 1 February 2005, the film grossed \$34.3 million domestically and \$133 million overseas for a worldwide total of \$167.3 million. Based on a \$155 million production budget, as well as additional marketing costs, the film was a [box-office bomb](#), with projected losses of as much as \$71 million.
- **Critical reception**
- On [Rotten Tomatoes](#) the film holds an approval rating of 16% based on 206 reviews, with an average rating of 4.00/10. The website's critical consensus states: "Even at nearly three hours long, this ponderous, talky, and emotionally distant biopic fails to illuminate Alexander's life." On [Metacritic](#), the film has a weighted average score of 40 out of 100, based on 42 critics, indicating "mixed or average reviews". Audiences polled by [CinemaScore](#) gave the film an average grade of "D+" on an A+ to F scale.
- One of the principal complaints among American film critics was that *Alexander* resembled less an action-drama film than a history

documentary. [Roger Ebert](#) of the [Chicago Sun-Times](#), giving the film two out of four stars, wrote in his review, "[W]e welcome the scenes of battle, pomp and circumstance because at least for a time we are free of the endless narration of Ptolemy the historian."

- Faint praise came from [Todd McCarthy](#) of [Variety](#) who wrote, "Oliver Stone's *Alexander* is at best an honorable failure, an intelligent and ambitious picture that crucially lacks dramatic flair and emotional involvement. Dry and academic where [Troy](#) (2004) was vulgar and willfully ahistorical".
- Keith Uhlich of [The A.V. Club](#) named *Alexander: The Ultimate Cut* the tenth-
- **Nominations**
- The film was nominated in six categories at the [Golden Raspberry Awards](#) in 2005: Worst Picture, Worst Actor (Colin Farrell), Worst Actress (Angelina Jolie) and Worst Director (Oliver Stone), Worst Supporting Actor (Val Kilmer) and Worst Screenplay, thereby becoming the second-most-nominated potential "Razzie" film of 2004; however, it won no awards.
- At the [2004 Stinkers Bad Movie Awards](#), it received nine nominations: Worst Picture, Worst Director (Stone), Worst Actor (Farrell), Worst Supporting Actress (both Jolie and Dawson), Worst Screenplay, Most Intrusive Musical Score, Worst Female Fake Accent (Dawson and Jolie, lumped into one nomination), and Least "Special" Special Effects. Its only wins were for Most Intrusive Musical Score and Worst Female Fake Accent.

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01] The Greatest General in History? Alexander the Great (All Parts)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=K7lb6KWBanI&t=1s> [53:12]

02] What Do We Know About Alexander the Great? [29:56]  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jie5fjyLvpY>

03] Finding The Lost Tomb of Alexander the Great [44:25]  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoLDukkR6fE>

04] Alexander the Great: Life and Reign of the King of the Macedonian Empire  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_E7JX-rVdFk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_E7JX-rVdFk) [13:28]

05] Alexander: Indian Campaign, Reforms, Plans, Death - Ancient History  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXK-vN1J61w> [2:41:17]

# INDIAN CAMPAIGN

<https://www.thecollector.com/alexander-the-great-india-conquest-achaemenid-empire/>

After conquering most of the Achaemenid, Empire Alexander the Great turned his attention to India. Here on the Indian subcontinent, he would fight some of the hardest battles of his career.

With the conquest of the Achaemenid Empire all but complete, Alexander the Great continued to march his armies eastwards into the Indian subcontinent. The Achaemenid Empire had established at least two [satrapies](#) in the [Indus River Valley](#). Moreover, the Indian subcontinent was a fabulously wealthy land that few Greeks or Macedonians had ever seen. Yet, the various rulers of India were also powerful warlords who commanded enormous armies and would not easily be defeated by Alexander the Great. As a result, there, the Macedonians would face their most arduous of campaigns. In the end, the conquest of India was to prove too much, and Alexander the Great was forced to turn back.



Indian Warriors (Sattagyadian, Gandharan, Hindush),  
Naqsh-e Rostam Reliefs of Xerxes I, c.480 BCE

The invasion of India by [Alexander the Great](#) was limited to the area of the Indus River Basin. In the decades prior to the invasion, the [Achaemenid Empire](#) had controlled most of

the region, but evidence of Achaemenid rule east of the Indus River was nonexistent. Most of the region was ruled by small states centered around the dominance of a particular tribe. These states had recognized Achaemenid overlordship and supplied troops to the Achaemenid Empire's armies. This was a highly urbanized region with extensive agricultural cultivation and well-established trade routes. There were also some far less developed communities in areas around the forests, deserts, and coasts.

Greek accounts make no mention of [Buddhism](#), temples, or even religion. The only reference to the [caste system is the Brahmins](#), who are described not as priests but as philosophers and advisors to the kings and princes of India. Greek observers also witnessed [Sati](#), the practice of widows immolating themselves on their husband's funeral pyres, the ritual exposure of dead bodies to vultures, and the practice of slavery. However, the Greeks also recognized cultural differences between different groups of Indians in different parts of the Indus River Valley. Perhaps what made the greatest impression, though, were the [Indian medical sciences](#) which in several areas were more advanced than those of the Greeks.



**Bihr Mound, Gandharan/Achaemenid ruins of Taxila,**  
**c. 800-525 BCE, via UNESCO World Heritage Center**



The invasion of India was in many ways the next logical phase in [Alexander the Great's conquest](#) of the Achaemenid Empire. This was, after all, the only remaining part of the Achaemenid Empire that had not submitted to him. In 327 BCE, Alexander summoned the chieftains of the satrapy of Gandhara to submit to him. Ambhi (in Greek Omphis), ruler of [Taxila](#), complied and would lead his forces alongside Alexander the Great during the invasion. Alexander married [Roxana](#) to cement his relations with the satraps in Central Asia and secure his supply routes and lines of communication. He also detached his general Amyntas with 3,500 cavalry and 10,000 infantry to guard the region before embarking on his campaign.

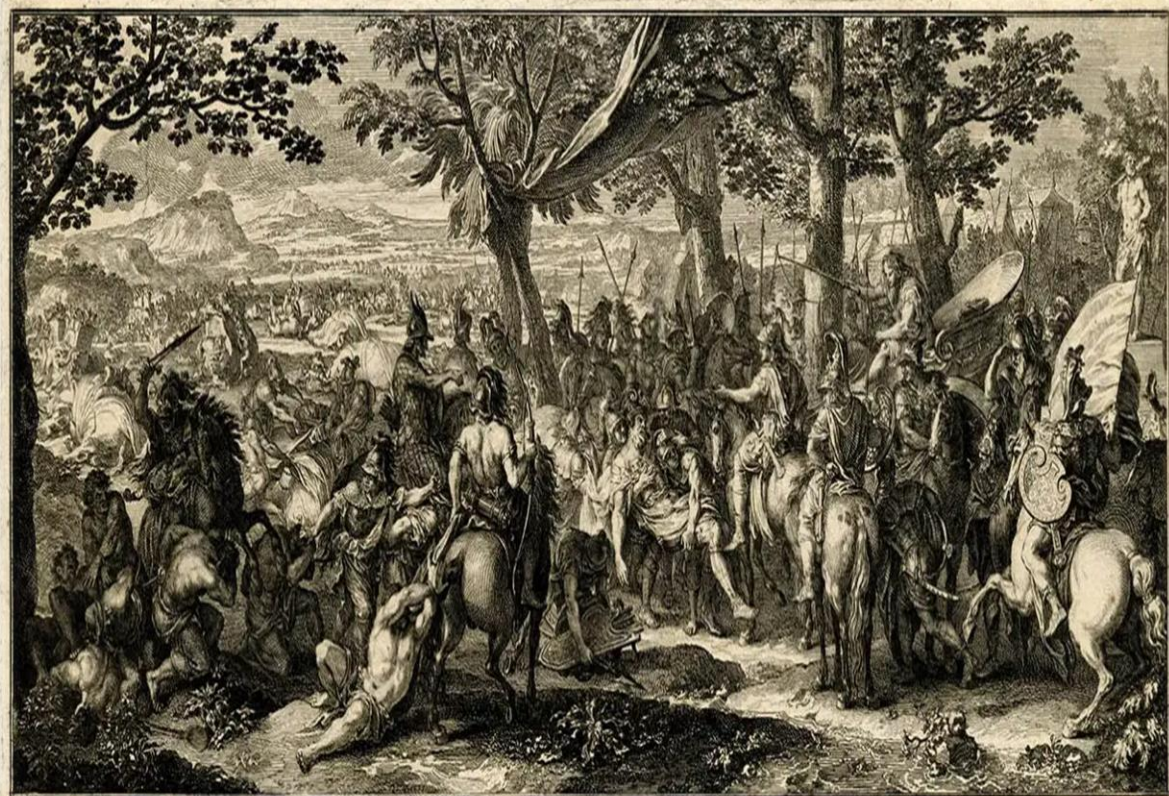
Between May 327 BCE and March 326 BCE, Alexander the Great began the first phase of his invasion with what is now known as the Cophen Campaign. His goal was to secure his line of communication by capturing fortresses of the Aspasioi, Guraeans, and Assakenoi tribes in the Kunar valley of modern Afghanistan and the Panjkora (Dir) and Swat valleys of modern Pakistan. The Aspasioi were the first to be conquered and Alexander the Great took their cities after a series of sharp engagements during which both he and his general [Ptolemy](#) were wounded; though Ptolemy killed the Aspasioi king. The Guraeans then razed their cities and attempted to catch the Macedonians off guard but were defeated. Next, the Assaceni were defeated in a tough battle and their king was slain. However, Cleophis, the mother of the Assaceni king, refused to surrender the capital city of Massaga, which only fell after a tough siege. Finally, Alexander took Aornus, which proved to be his last great siege and secured his lines of communication across the Hindu Kush.



*Alexander and Porus*, by Vincenzo Camuccini,  
1771-1844 From The Metropolitan Museum of Art



After debouching from the Hindu Kush, Alexander the Great's army linked up with the forces of king Ambhi of Taxila. Continuing their march to the east, they entered the territory of [king Porus \(possibly Paurava\)](#), who ruled between the [Hydaspes](#) and Acesines (Chenab) rivers in the Punjab region. Porus and Ambhi had long been rivals and now Porus was determined to defend his kingdom. Against Alexander the Great's army of 40,000 infantry, 5-7,000 cavalry, and roughly 5,000 allied Indians, Porus mustered 20-50,000 infantry, 2-4,000 cavalry, 1,000 chariots, and 85-200 war elephants. Both armies encamped on opposite banks of the Hydaspes (Jhelum) river, which was so deep and fast that whichever side attempted to attack across it would likely be destroyed by the other. For several days Alexander moved his cavalry up and down the riverbank looking for a place to cross while Porus shadowed him. Eventually, Alexander was able to move a force across the river while his [general Craterus](#) distracted Porus' forces.



LA VERTU PLAIST QU'ON QUE VAINCUE .

*Alexandre n'est pas seulement touché de compassion en voyant la grandeur d'âme du Roy Porus qu'il a vaincu et fait son prisonnier, mais il lui donne des marques honorables de son estime en le recevant au nombre de ses amis, et en lui donnant ensuite un plus grand Royaume que celui qu'il avoit perdu .*



SIC VIRTUS ET VICTA PLACET .

*Porus Rexis victi, captique magnanimitatem non misericordia modo sed honore persequitur Alexander, illumque in amicorum numerum recipit mox donat ampliore regno .*

**Landscape with King Porus wounded brought before Alexander the Great,**  
**by Charles Le Brun, 1695, via the British Museum**

Porus soon discovered Alexander had crossed the river and dispatched his son and chariots to try and stop him. However, they were defeated, and Porus' son was killed. When the main battle began Alexander the Great sent his [horse archers](#) to attack the Indian cavalry on the right wing, while his Companion cavalry attacked the Indian cavalry on the left. Seeing their compatriots on the left in trouble, the Indian cavalry on the right rode to their aid. They were followed by the rest of the Macedonian cavalry, attacked from the rear, and scattered. The Indian war elephants and infantry then attacked and were met by the Macedonian phalanx. A tough hand to hand battle ensued with each side launching repeated attacks and suffering many casualties. Eventually, Craterus arrived with reinforcement just as Alexander the Great was able to attack the rear of the Porus' army with his cavalry, finally breaking it and effectively ending [the Battle of the Hydaspes](#).

The Macedonians suffered heavy casualties during the battle of the Hydaspes. Nonetheless, when Porus surrendered, Alexander the Great spared his life, returned his throne, and helped him reconcile with Ambhi out of admiration for his bravery and prowess. An able local ruler also helped Alexander administer his territory. During the battle, Alexander the Great's horse, [Bucephalus](#), had suffered a mortal wound. Having first received [Bucephalus](#) as a teen and ridden him across Asia, Alexander the Great founded the city of Alexandria Bucephalus in his honor. Alexander the Great then marched on receiving the surrender of additional kings until near the Hyphasis (modern Beas) river, his men finally refused to go further. They [mutinied](#) and begged Alexander to turn back and allow them to return home.

The Hyphasis river is not too distant from the Ganges, which the Macedonians had been told was incredibly wide and deep, making any crossing difficult. It also sat on the border of the vast and powerful Nanda Empire. Having been mauled in battle by Porus' army, Alexander the Great's Macedonians were utterly demoralized by the prospect of facing another more powerful Indian army. Unable to convince his men to march further on, Alexander sulked in his tent for several days until the soldiers begged him to lead them once more and professed their love and loyalty. Thus reconciled, Alexander and the Macedonian army began the long march west. Interestingly, the Nanda king, Dhana Nanda would only rule for a few more years as he was overthrown by [Chandragupta Maurya](#), founder of the Mauryan Empire, in 322 BC.

After the mutiny, Alexander the Great marched his army down river along the Hydaspes to Acesine in order to define the eastern limits of his empire. However, the Mallians and Oxydracians, though traditionally enemies, had formed an alliance to oppose the Macedonians. Their combined forces were said to number 90,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry, and 900 chariots. Unbeknownst to the Indians, Alexander the Great was willing to wage war year-round, which was unthinkable to most ancient armies. Therefore, the Indians were caught off guard by the speed of Alexander's advance. Not wanting to let any Indians escape, Alexander carried out a sophisticated campaign of river crossings and rapid marches with different corps of his army acting independently. Soon the alliance between the Mallians and Oxydracians collapsed as they could not agree on who should command or what their strategy should be, and they retreated into their capitals.

Finally, Alexander the Great approached the capital of the Mallians, possibly the modern city of Multan. The Mallians attempted to meet Alexander the Great in the field one last time but were again defeated. When the Macedonians approached the city, the Mallians abandoned the outer fortifications and retreated into the city. Alexander set his men to [undermine the walls](#) but became impatient. He seized a ladder and scaled the walls with two other soldiers. The rest of the Macedonians attempted to follow but so crowded the ladders that they broke under the weight. When the Mallians realized who Alexander was and how vulnerable he was, they desperately sought to kill him. Although the Macedonians begged Alexander to jump off the wall onto their shields, he instead rushed further into the citadel. There, he killed the Mallian leader but was [shot in the lung with an arrow](#). The Macedonians then broke into the citadel and rescued Alexander, whom they carried back for medical treatment and proceeded to massacre the Mallians, who they believed had killed their king.

After hovering near death for four days, Alexander recovered from his wound and received the surrender of the surviving Mallians. He then continued down the river, conquering the remaining Indian tribes in his path. Upon reaching the coast, Alexander the Great [commissioned a fleet to explore the Persian Gulf](#) and marched the rest of his army back to Babylon across the brutal Gedrosian desert. In India, he left Peithon and Eudemus as his satraps alongside Porus and Ambhi with a large army. After Alexander the Great's [sudden death in 323 BC](#), Porus was assassinated by Eudemus, who was then executed by another of Alexander's former generals, while Peithon was killed in battle, and Ambhi lost his kingdom to Chandraguta Maurya.



Alexander the Great's invasion of the [Achaemenid Empire](#)'s territory in the Indian subcontinent brought two vastly different cultures into direct contact for the first time. Greek colonies were established, so that cultural contact and exchange continued long after Alexander the Great departed. As a result, there was a lively exchange of ideas about philosophy, religion, medicine, science, mathematics, geography, warfare, trade, and art. The Indo-Greek artworks that have survived form their own distinct style and are some of the most impressive pieces to have been produced during this period. Stories of India were passed down through the centuries in Europe so that Alexander's conquests assumed mythic proportions and exerted a profound influence. It would not be unreasonable to therefore conclude that Alexander the Great's time in India was the most important aspect of his legacy.



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